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ABOUT US

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President Obama's Remarks on the Afghanistan War

President Barack Obama delivers a televised address from the East Room of the White House in Washington on his plan to drawdown U.S. troops in Afghanistan. (AP Photo)

WASHINGTON, DC, June 22 – In a televised address, President Barack Obama delivered remarks outlining America's way forward on the war in Afghanistan, including the announcement of withdrawing 33,000 U.S. troops. "... Starting next month, we will be able to remove 10,000 of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year, and we will bring home a total of 33,000 troops by next summer, fully recovering the surge I announced at West Point... Our mission will change from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security." Among the reasons for rollback of combat troops, President Obama cited al Qaeda's fraying organization. "The information that we recovered from [Osama] bin Laden's compound shows al Qaeda under enormous strain. Bin Laden expressed concern that al Qaeda had been unable to effectively replace senior terrorists that had been killed, and that al Qaeda has failed in its effort to portray America as a nation at war with Islam -- thereby draining more widespread support. Al Qaeda remains dangerous, and we must be vigilant against attacks. But we have put al Qaeda on a path to defeat, and we will not relent until the job is done." **Full Text**

INTERNATIONAL

Update on the Situation in Southern Sudan

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, June 13 - Secretary Clinton met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles and representatives from North and South Sudan for high-level negotiations organized by the Africa Union High-Level Panel. A senior State Department official stated: "So this negotiation really is very important; it isn't over yet. To try and get the sides to sit down and say, okay, let's pull back from these kind of military confrontations and get back to negotiating, we're less than a month away from the South's independence. The Secretary, I think, came at a very important time to indicate how important this was to the United States, how much we would lend support to any agreement they reach, and that we supported the CPA, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the idea of it of coming out with two viable states at the end of it."

The United States is deeply troubled by reports of violent clashes between military units in Southern Kordofan state in Sudan. Such violent acts not only result in the loss of innocent lives, but they further throw into jeopardy the peace that both sides had worked so hard to build. The United States calls for an immediate halt to all military actions that prejudice the outcome of negotiations on future political and security arrangements for Southern Kordofan and neighboring Blue Nile state. **Read More** | **Statement on Escalating Violence in the Southern Kordofan State of Sudan** | **Special Envoy to Sudan**

Secretary Clinton Travels to Guatemala and Jamaica

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks during the Central American Security Strategy Summit in Guatemala City. (AP Photo)

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala, June 22 – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton travelled south to Guatemala City, Guatemala, and Montego Bay, Jamaica on June 22.. In Guatemala City , Secretary Clinton delivered remarks at the Central American Security Conference (SICA), where she stressed the importance of shared responsibility in executing a shared strategy to strengthen regional security. "... The countries represented around here and the extraordinary leaders who are here on behalf of their countries must have the resources they require. Businesses and the rich in every country must pay their fair share of taxes and become full partners in a whole-of-society effort. True security cannot be funded on the backs of the poor. Civil society must be a full partner in defining and implementing long-term solutions." The employment of durable solutions was also echoed in Secretary Clinton's remarks in Jamaica at the High Level Caribbean-U.S. Conference. The Secretary touched upon several points highlighting this long-term approach. **Remarks at the Central American Security Conference** | **Remarks at the High Level Caribbean-U.S. Conference**

Secretary Clinton Visits Africa for AGOA Ministerial Forum

WASHINGTON, DC, June 10 — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton traveled to Lusaka, Zambia, on on June 10 for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Ministerial Forum, where she showcased this centerpiece of our trade policy with Africa and engaged with government, private sector, and civil society representatives from 37 different countries. While in Zambia, she also met with Zambian President Rupiah

Banda and participated in events highlighting U.S. Government initiatives to improve the lives of the Zambian people.
From there, Secretary Clinton traveled to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to meet with Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. In Tanzania, she highlighted our successful bilateral engagement including the Feed the Future program to reduce hunger. In Ethiopia, the Secretary focused on regional issues, visiting the African Union (AU) headquarters where she metwith AU Chairperson Jean Ping.. She also met with civil society representatives to draw attention to their innovative work. **Releases from Secretary Clinton's Travel to Africa** | **DipNote Blog**

Update on the Situation in Libya

ABU DHABI, UAE, June 9 - In recent travel to the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Secretary Clinton met with the Libya Contact Group to discuss with international partners a range of issues including the situation in Libya and the ongoing implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973. "We continued our ongoing dialogue about steps we can take to protect the Libyan people, pressure Qadhafi to hasten his departure, and lay the groundwork for a successful transition to a unified, democratic, Libya. On each of these goals, we are making progress and we have increased the pressure on Qadhafi. But as long as he continues his attacks on his own people, our military mission to protect them will continue," Secretary Clinton stated.

The U.S. also addressed the situation in Libya during the seventeenth session of the U. N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland which ended on June 17th. The United States is deeply concerned about the welfare of the hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced and caught up in the Libya conflict, and continues to call upon Libyan authorities to provide humanitarian actors with full access to those in need and to ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance.

Public Affairs Spokesperson Victoria Nuland stated, "...Our view is that the NATO mission in Libya has been an essential component of our effort to make clear to Qadhafi that his days are numbered, that it's time for him to go. The NATO mission, which has been increasingly effective, has also provided space for the Libyan rebels to improve their military game, and you see the gains that they have made."
Remarks by Secretary Clinton following June 9 Libya Contact Group Meeting | **U.S. Government Humanitarian Response** | **Status of Assistance to Transnational Council** | **U.S. Accomplishments at the UN Human Rights Council's 17th Session**

Inside The Beltway

The Way Forward in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON, DC, June 23 – Secretary Clinton testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, echoing the President's remarks on Afghanistan and updating the committee on civilian efforts in the nation. "Since January 2009, we have tripled the number of diplomats, development experts, and other civilian specialists on the ground in Afghanistan, and we have expanded our presence out in the field nearly six-fold. And these new civilians have changed the way we do business, focusing on key ministries and sectors, and holding ourselves and our partners to higher standards " Secretary Clinton said. "despite the many challenges that remain, life is better for most Afghans. And the Karzai government has many failings, to be sure. But more people, in every research analysis we are privy to, say they see progress in their streets, their schools, their fields. And we remain committed to fighting corruption and strengthening the rule of law in a very challenging environment."
Full Text

Diplomacy Briefing Series Conference – U.S. Foreign Policy in the Caribbean

WASHINGTON, DC, June 24 – On Monday, June 27, the U.S. Department of State will host its third Diplomacy Briefing Series conference on U.S. Foreign Policy in the Caribbean region. Speakers willinclude Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero and Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Arturo Valenzuela. Additionally, this Briefing will include a panel of non-Department experts from the Caribbean Research & Policy Institute, a think tank based in Washington, D.C. The expansion to include outside experts in the program reflectsa core objective of the Diplomacy Briefing Series, which is to more fully engage diaspora communities. Diaspora refers to groups of people who have migrated and settled away from their ancestral homeland. Approximately 62 million first- and second-generation members of diaspora communities live across the United States.

The effort to develop diaspora-centered partnerships is an important strategy Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton reiterated in her recent trip to Jamaica. "… I'm a big believer in the power of diaspora. And people of Caribbean descent have made a powerful contribution to every country in which they have settled," Secretary Clinton said. "… The State Department recently launched the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance. We call it IDEA. The alliance brings together governments, corporations, and nonprofit organizations to make it easier for diaspora communities to promote trade and investment, to start businesses, or develop other projects that will benefit their countries of origin." By reaching out to diaspora communities, the Diplomacy Briefing Series continues the Department's overall mission to advance this collaboration and improve the quality of U.S. foreign policy.

Diplomacy Briefing Series |Democracy and Global Affairs |Western Hemisphere Affairs |International Diaspora Engagement Alliance

2011 World Food Prize Honors Two Former Presidents

WASHINGTON, DC, June 21 — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted the 2011 World Food Prize Laureate ceremony at the U.S. Department of State on June 21. World Food Prize Foundation President Ambassador Kenneth Quinn announced the 2011 Laureates, John Agyekum Kufuor, former president of Ghana, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, former president of Brazil. The two were honored for creating and implementing government policies to help end hunger and poverty in their countries. In addition to remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ambassador Quinn, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, and Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Robert Hormats addressed the gathering.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the World Food Prize, which recognizes individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. The World Food Prize includes a cash award of $250,000 and a sculpture by world-renowned designer Saul Bass. Each year more than 4,000 institutions and organizations are invited to nominate candidates for the prize.

The award will be formally presented in a ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines, Iowa, on October 13, 2011 in conjunction with the Norman E. Borlaug International Symposium. In honor of World Food Prize founder Dr. Norman Borlaug, this year's October events will also include the Grand Opening of the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates, an educational center and place to honor all those who have made strides in the fight against hunger.

Global Issues Affecting the Nation

Advancing Women and Girls in Science

(AP Photo)

WASHINGTON, DC, June 13 – Over 100 scientists, educators and representatives from the private sector and foreign governments met at the U.S. Department of State as part of a symposium titled "Changing Mindsets to Promote Women and Girls in Science." Women scientists from Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, India, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, and the West Bank participated in the event. The symposium provided an opportunity to discuss ways to encourage women and girls to engage in science, technology, engineering, and math careers (STEM), and how to keep them in those careers.

Ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the UN, announced that OIC will invite leadership from the RAISE Project, a campaign to increase the status of professional women in STEM fields, to meet with OIC leaders to consider how RAISE might be adapted to Muslim-majority countries. Ambassador Gokcen called for a conference in the Middle East region on the same themes, and the State Department pledged partnership and support to making that a reality. **Press Notice** | **DipNote Blog**